IN THE BEGINNING...

Few stories in the history of an organization hold more interest for members than the tale of how it all got started. It is well known that the AMTA was first formed as the American Association of Masseurs and Masseuses on August 16, 1943 in Chicago by a Post Graduate Class of the College of Swedish Massage. Little else beyond those sketchy facts has come to light in recent years, and those who were there at that first meeting have ceased to tell the story that I'm sure was recounted again and again over dinner and at meetings of the AAMM, and later the AMTA.

The story of such an important event as the birth of the AMTA should be part of our professional heritage. Since there were no minutes kept of that first meeting, there is no official record of what happened. The next best source of information would be from someone who was actually there, and since memory fades and distorts with time, the closer the source is to 1943 the better the chance of an accurate report.

We are very fortunate to have a personal account of the first meeting of the AAMM from Charles T. Williams of California, who was elected as the first President at that time. He wrote about the birth of the AAMM in the *The Masseur* of January 1950. That was seven years after the fact, but it is the oldest narration of the event that we know of.

The story as told by Charles T. Williams is, of course, from his own perspective, and is written in his informal and sometimes "folksy" style. It gives us a sense of our first President's personality, and reminds us what life was like in post World War II America. It depicts the Charter Members as diverse, fun-loving, and dedicated to the profession.

Here is the story told fondly by Charter Member and first President, Charles T. Williams. The text is unedited so you can get the flavor of the original document — typo's, misspellings and all.

THE MASSEUR
Official Bulletin of the A.A.M.M.
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GREETINGS FELLOW MEMBERS:

Here we are with the first issue of the bulletin in this year of 1950. "How time does fly." The 7th year of our existence, and we will hold our 5th National Convention this year. An Anniversary year.

It seems only yesterday that we gathered in the Assembly room at the College of Swedish Massage in Chicago to hold an open forum and question period during a Post Graduate Class. Dean Swanson asked me to take charge of the meeting, and as I stood upon the platform and looked over the class, I was proud that I had the opportunity to face such a gathering of intensly sincere people who had devoted time and effort to master the science of our profession. I can close my eyes and see them again.

Right down there in the front row is Blanche Petrie and near her is Mrs. Gavert; over there next to the wall are Rev. and Mrs. Griswold the colored minister, who had so much fun working on that other colored minister from Ft Gaines Georgia, who by the way, told me that story of the colored preacher who blasted his congregation because they had no faith. And there were Ernest and Gertrude Corey and side by side are Archie and Eudy Horner, "like two peas in a pod;" and there is Al Gresham just coming into the room, here is Jimmie Tibbetts sitting on the isle I can see them all. There is Delbert Vincent and Doc Cole. There is Ira Lewis in his Army uniform and over there is Pearl Snyder, who later became Mrs. Ira Lewis (That was quite a romance). They are all there, Yes their faces come back to me now as I saw them that afternoon; as I stood on the platform and called the meeting to order, and explained the purpose of the meeting.

There were no questions brought up, but several told of experiences they had in their practice at home, and someone suggested we start our own Association. I don't remember who made the suggestion, but several told of their experiences in other Associations that were objectionable, how they were assessed and bombarded by book salesmen sent out by their Association. There were several other features mentioned that were not good, so that the suggestion that we form our own Association was voted upon and passed unamiously.

No minutes were kept of this first meeting, so there is no record of who said what or how we proceeded, but our pledge was outlined, and I took it into Mr. Hedenvahl who looked it over and made some suggestions then had it memeographed for us and every one of the 41 present signed and paid for their first years dues 50¢.

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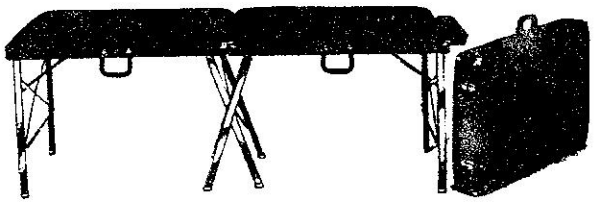

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Officers were elected. The writer was elected President, Ira Lewis was elected Vice President. E.O. Easter was elected Secretary and Mrs. Glenn H. Gavert was elected Treasurer. That was the start of what later became known as the American Association of Masseures & Masseuses.

After the organization was completed we were entertained by one of the members who is one of the best "Magicians" I have ever seen. I am not going to mention his name as he is still one of our active members and is going to put on a show for us at the Convention, but all the Charter members will remember him and know he is very good.

After the meeting I had a talk with Harry McConnell who at that time was Registrar at the College, and he told me of the efforts of others who had organized Associations and had failed. He informed me that he earnestly believed it was a waste of time and effort to put anything like this over, judging from the experience of others, but after further talks with some of the members I was convinced it was worth a trial and all the members agreed to do their utmost to put it over. And it has proven worth while, because, to-day, after many trials and tribulations the AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MASSEURS & MASSEUSES is known the length and breadth of our country and Canada, and we are steadily growing.

Of the 41 Charter members who signed the pledge at the time of our organization 21 are still with us and are 100% active. Some of those who have left us have passed away and others have moved or quit the business and have dropped out. But we have continued to grow and have proven that we started out on a sound basis and all our efforts have been worth while.

Charles T. Williams

NUMBERING SYSTEM FOR THE MASSAGE THERAPY JOURNAL

You may have noticed that the system for designating issues of *The Massage Journal* has been inconsistent through the years. Sometimes there would be a volume and number, sometimes the month and year, and other times the season (e.g. summer) and the year.

This inconsistency makes it difficult to keep track of the chronology of the issues, e.g., there are two issues for the Winter 1985. A common way to keep track of periodicals is to use the "volume and number" system. The volume indicates the number of publication years from the beginning issue, and the number refers to the number of the issue within the year.

The original publication of the AMTA (formerly AAMM) was *The Masseur,* which first used volume and number (Volume 2 was 1946), and in 1953 changed to month and year. In 1962 the name was changed to *The Massage Journal* and the month and year were still used to identify the issue. Every so often through the years a volume and number would appear on an issue, but with no apparent system.

Starting with this issue, *The Massage Therapy Journal* will be identified by volume and number, as well as by season and year. Since the volume is supposed to indicate the number of years since first publication, this issue will be Volume 26 Number 2 (Spring 1987). This is the second issue of the year, the first being Winter 1987. Designation by season is logical since the issues come out four times per year, roughly corresponding to the seasons.

By adopting the volume and number system, *The Massage Therapy Journal* will join the ranks of other professional journals which use this method, and writers will be able to refer to journal articles more accurately. The volume number will also indicate more clearly the number of years the journal has been published.

Patricia J. Benjamin
National Historian
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